



PUBLIC NOTICE

Federal Communications Commission
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**WIRELESS TELECOMMUNICATION BUREAU SEEKS COMMENT ON ACR
ELECTRONICS, INC. REQUEST FOR WAIVER TO PERMIT CERTIFICATION AND
USE OF PERSONAL LOCATOR BEACON WITH TEXTING CAPABILITY IN LIEU
OF 121.5 MHZ HOMING SIGNAL**

WT Docket No. 15-85

Comment Date: May 7, 2015

Reply Date: May 22, 2015

On March 5, 2015, ACR Electronics, Inc., filed a request for waiver of Section 95.1402(b) of the Commission's Rules¹ to permit equipment authorization for the ACR SARLink Combined 2-Way Communicator Personal Locator Beacon (SARLink).² Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs) are emergency radiobeacons intended for use by individuals in remote areas, which transmit a distress signal on 406.0-406.1 MHz for communication with the COSPAS-SARSAT satellite system³ and a lower-powered signal on frequency 121.5 MHz that is used by search and rescue (SAR) personnel as a homing beacon to help locate persons in distress. PLBs must conform to the Radio Technical Commission for Maritime Services (RTCM) standard that contains minimum requirements for PLBs' functional and technical performance.⁴

ACR requires a waiver of Section 95.1402(b) because the SARLink does not include a 121.5 MHz beacon. Instead, the SARLink incorporates two-way text messaging capability through the Iridium satellite system. ACR asserts that this capability will provide better distress alerting and locating assistance than a 121.5 MHz homing beacon because SARLink users will be able to text SAR personnel

¹ 47 C.F.R. § 95.1402(b).

² Request for Waiver, filed March 5, 2015, by ACR Electronics, Inc.

³ COSPAS-SARSAT is an international satellite-based SAR system established by Canada, France, Russia, and the United States. COSPAS is an acronym for a Russian phrase meaning space system for search and distress vessels; SARSAT stands for Search and Rescue Satellite Aided Tracking.

⁴ Section 95.1402 requires PLBs to meet the requirements in RTCM Recommended Standards for 406 MHz Satellite Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs), Version 1.1, RTCM Paper 76-2002/SC110-STD, dated June 19, 2002, but RTCM has revised the standard and the Commission has proposed to amend the rule to require PLBs to meet the requirements in RTCM Standard 11010.2 for 406 MHz Satellite Personal Locator Beacons, with Amendment 1 and Amendment 2, dated June 8, 2012 (RTCM 11010.2). See Amendment of the Commission's Rules Regarding Maritime Radio Equipment and Related Matters, *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, WT Docket No. 14-36, 29 FCC Rcd 2516, 2521 ¶ 13 (2014). ACR states that the SARLink complies with the RTCM 11010.2 standard.

directly and provide location information in addition to the Global Positioning System data encoded in the COSPAS-SARSAT message, such as physical landmarks and obstacles. Users also will be able to provide important details regarding the emergency, such as the number of people involved and the number and nature of any injuries. ACR argues that certification and use of the SARLink will save lives and reduce the cost of rescues, and is therefore in the public interest.

We seek comment on the waiver request. Commenters should address whether two-way texting capability is an adequate substitute for a 121.5 MHz homing beacon for purposes of locating persons in distress.

Procedural Matters

Interested parties may file comments and reply comments in response to the waiver request on or before the dates listed on the first page of this *Public Notice*. All pleadings must reference WT Docket No. 15-85. Parties may file comments using (1) the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS), (2) the Federal Government's eRulemaking Portal, or (3) by filing paper copies.⁵

- **Electronic Filers:** File comments electronically using the Internet by accessing the ECFS: <http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/ecfs/> or the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Filers should follow the instructions provided on the website for submitting comments.
- In completing the transmittal screen, filers should include their full name, U.S. Postal Service mailing address, and the applicable docket or rulemaking number. Parties may also submit an electronic comment by Internet e-mail. To get filing instructions, filers should send an e-mail to ecfs@fcc.gov, and include the following words in the body of the message, "get form." A sample form and directions will be sent in response.
- **Paper Filers:** Parties who choose to file by paper must file an original and two copies of each filing.

Send filings by hand or messenger delivery, by commercial overnight courier, or by first-class or overnight U.S. Postal Service mail. Address filings to the Commission's Secretary, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission.

- Deliver hand-delivered or messenger-delivered paper filings to FCC Headquarters at 445 12th St., SW, Room TW-A325, Washington, DC 20554 between 8:00 AM and 7:00 PM. Use rubber bands or fasteners to hold deliveries together. Dispose of all envelopes before entering the building.
- Send commercial overnight mail (other than U.S. Postal Service Express Mail and Priority Mail) to 9300 East Hampton Drive, Capitol Heights, MD 20743.
- Send U.S. Postal Service first-class, Express, and Priority mail to 445 12th Street, SW, Washington DC 20554.

Parties are requested to send one copy of their comments and reply comments to Best Copy and Printing, Inc., Portals II, 445 12th Street, S.W., Room CY-B402, Washington, D.C. 20554, (800) 378-3160, e-mail FCC@BCPIWEB.com.

The request, and comments and reply comments filed in response to this *Public Notice* are available for viewing via the Commission's Electronic Comment Filing System (ECFS) by entering the

⁵ See Electronic Filing of Documents in Rulemaking Proceedings, *Report and Order*, GC Docket No. 97-113, 13 FCC Rcd 11322 (1998).

docket number, WT No. 15-85. The documents also will be available for public inspection and copying during business hours in the FCC Reference Information Center, Portals II, 445 12th Street S.W., Room CY-A257, Washington, D.C. 20554. They may also be purchased from Best Copy and Printing, Inc., telephone (800) 378-3160, facsimile (202) 488-5563, TTY (202) 488-5562, e-mail FCC@BCPIWEB.com.

Alternate formats of this *Public Notice* (computer diskette, large print, audio recording, and Braille) are available to persons with disabilities by contacting the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau at (202) 418-0530 (voice), (202) 418-0432 (TTY), or send an e-mail to fcc504@fcc.gov.

This proceeding has been designated as a “permit-but-disclose” proceeding in accordance with the Commission's *ex parte* rules.⁶ Persons making *ex parte* presentations must file a copy of any written presentation or a memorandum summarizing any oral presentation within two business days after the presentation (unless a different deadline applicable to the Sunshine period applies). Persons making oral *ex parte* presentations are reminded that memoranda summarizing the presentation must (1) list all persons attending or otherwise participating in the meeting at which the *ex parte* presentation was made, and (2) summarize all data presented and arguments made during the presentation. If the presentation consisted in whole or in part of the presentation of data or arguments already reflected in the presenter's written comments, memoranda or other filings in the proceeding, the presenter may provide citations to such data or arguments in his or her prior comments, memoranda, or other filings (specifying the relevant page and/or paragraph numbers where such data or arguments can be found) in lieu of summarizing them in the memorandum. Documents shown or given to Commission staff during *ex parte* meetings are deemed to be written *ex parte* presentations and must be filed consistent with rule 1.1206(b). In proceedings governed by rule 1.49(f) or for which the Commission has made available a method of electronic filing, written *ex parte* presentations and memoranda summarizing oral *ex parte* presentations, and all attachments thereto, must be filed through the electronic comment filing system available for that proceeding, and must be filed in their native format (*e.g.*, .doc, .xml, .ppt, searchable .pdf). Participants in this proceeding should familiarize themselves with the Commission's *ex parte* rules.

For further information, contact Mr. Tim Maguire of the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Mobility Division, at (202) 418-2155, tim.maguire@fcc.gov.

Action by the Deputy Chief, Mobility Division, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau.

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⁶ See 47 C.F.R. §§ 1.1200(a), 1.1206.